

Sample Aerobic Activity Plan for Beginners

This is a sample 12-week plan to help meet a goal of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.

- The best types of activities for this plan are ones that use large muscle groups (arms, trunk, legs), such as walking, dancing, cycling, swimming, or jogging.
- Remember to begin each session with a brief warm-up (5-10 minutes) and end with a cool-down period (5-10 minutes).
- Rate the intensity of your activity using the Borg Scale below. Use this scale to rate how hard you are exercising. Aerobic activities, like walking and cycling, should be done at level 13 (somewhat hard). Strength activities, like lifting dumbbells and pushups, should be done at levels 15-17 (hard to very hard). You can gradually make activities harder as you become more fit. Activities that used to be hard will become easier over time and earn a lower score compared to when you first started. For example, slow walking on level ground may be a level 13 effort for you in the beginning. As your fitness improves, it may take brisk walking up a slight hill to get to that same level 13 effort.

The Borg Category Rating Scale		
Least Effort		
6		
7	very, very light	
8		
9	very light	
10		
11	fairly light	*****
12		Aerobic Training Zone
13	somewhat hard	*****
14		
15	hard	*****
16		Strength Training Zone
17	very hard	*****
18		
19	very, very hard	
20		
Maximum Effort		

- You can adjust the days of the week on this plan to better fit your schedule.



Sample Aerobic Activity Plan for Beginners

Weeks 1 through 3 - Getting Started

	Day	Effort/Intensity	Total Duration
Week 1	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	
Week 2	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	
Week 3	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	10-15 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	



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Weeks 4 through 7 - Increasing Duration and Frequency

	Day	Effort/Intensity	Total Duration
Week 4 and Week 5	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	
Week 6	Sunday	Borg Level 14-15	20-30 minutes
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	
Week 7	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 7-10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	20-30 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	



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Weeks 8 through 12 – Increasing Duration

	Day	Effort/Intensity	Total Duration
Week 8 and Week 9	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Saturday	10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
Week 10	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 10	30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	Borg Level 14	30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 10	30 minutes
	Saturday	Borg Level 14	30 minutes
Week 11	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Saturday	10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
Week 12	Sunday	Rest	
	Monday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Tuesday	Rest	
	Wednesday	10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13 10 minutes at Borg Level 13-16 10 minutes at Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Thursday	Rest	
	Friday	Borg Level 11-13	30 minutes
	Saturday	Rest	



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Week 13 and beyond - Maintenance

- 30 minutes of aerobic activities
- 5-6 times/week
- At Borg Level 13 intensity

For even more help with controlling your weight, consider further increasing the duration, frequency, and/or intensity of your activity.



This sample plan was adapted from: *How to Write an Exercise Prescription* by MAJ Robert L. Gauer, MD and LTC Francis O'Connor, MD, FACSM, Dept of Family Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

